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CERTIFICATE

This certificate is issued in support of an application for Patent registration in a country outside New Zealand pursuant to the Patents Act 1953 and the Regulations thereunder.

I hereby certify that annexed is a true copy of the Provisional Specification as filed on 20 October 2003 with an application for Letters Patent number 529011 made by THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH COMMUNITY TRUST.

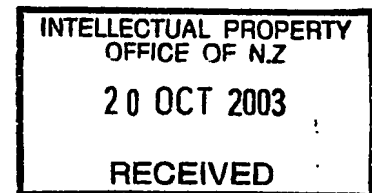
Dated 5 November 2004.

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Neville Harris
Commissioner of Patents, Trade Marks and Designs





NEW ZEALAND
PATENTS ACT, 1953

PROVISIONAL SPECIFICATION

A HANGING BASKET ASSEMBLY

We, THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH COMMUNITY TRUST, of Heaphy Road, Lake Haupiri, Westland, New Zealand, do hereby declare this invention to be described in the following statement:



FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to an improved hanging basket assembly for plants.

BACKGROUND TO THE INVENTION

It is known to use hanging basket assemblies to hold live, growing plants and flowers or artificial plants or flowers. The hanging baskets are usually lined with sphagnum moss because of its ability to absorb and retain water up to and exceeding 20 times its own weight. Sphagnum moss also has a natural and aesthetically pleasing appearance. Once lined, the baskets are filled with soil and potting mix, and the plants and/or flowers are planted or placed into the composite soil mixture as desired.

Hanging basket assemblies typically comprise a wire basket which receives and retains the sphagnum moss, potting mix, soil, plants, flowers etc. The baskets can be hung in position by a hook which is connected to the basket by a number of chains.

Chains are very important to the overall aesthetic appeal of the hanging basket assemblies, however their use also presents practical problems because of their non-rigid nature. When the hook is not being used, the chains and hook simply collapse into the basket. For this reason it is often necessary for people to use two hands and/or a hanging device when hanging a basket. Further, when shops present pre-arranged hanging basket assemblies complete with planted plants or flowers, but do not display these in a hanging position, the chains and hook simply collapse into the basket and this often damages the plants and/or flowers.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a hanging basket assembly which goes at least someway to alleviating the problems associated with the known hanging basket assemblies, or to at least provide the public with a useful choice.



SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In one aspect, the present invention broadly consists in a hanging basket assembly for growing and/or displaying a plant or plants including: a basket for receiving and retaining the plant(s); a hook member for hanging the basket which has a hook part and an attachment part; and one or more rigid chain members, wherein one end of each rigid chain member is attached to a part of the basket while the other end is attached to the attachment part of the hook member.

Preferably, each rigid chain member includes a rigid support rod and a chain. Preferably, each rigid chain member is configured so that its respective rigid support rod and chain are adjacent each other for their entire lengths.

Preferably, one end of each rigid support rod is attached to a part of the basket, while the other end is attached to the attachment part of the hook member. One end of each chain may attach to the attachment part of the hook member or near the end of the rigid support rod which attaches to the hook member. The other end of each chain may attach to the part of the basket to which its respective rigid support rod attaches or near the end of the rigid support rod which attaches to the basket. Additionally, each rigid support rod may pass through or be woven through a number of the links of its respective chain. Each chain may also be fixed for example by spot welding to its respective rigid support rod at various points along its length.

Alternatively, each rigid chain member may include a series of chain links which are individually fixed together to provide rigidity not otherwise provided for by chains.

As another alternative embodiment, the rigid chain member(s) may comprise a pre-formed and/or bent unitary member which is formed to provide a chain-like appearance along its length. Alternatively, the rigid chain member(s) may be formed from plaiting together one or more wires into a rigid member with a chain-like appearance.

This invention may also be said broadly to consist in the parts, elements and features referred to or indicated in the specification of the application, individually or collectively, and any or all combinations of any two or more said parts, elements or features, and where specific integers are mentioned herein which have known equivalents in the art to which this invention relates, such known equivalents are deemed to be incorporated herein as if individually set forth.

The invention consists in the foregoing and also envisages constructions of which the following gives examples only.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

A preferred embodiment of the invention will be described by way of example only and with reference to the drawings, in which:

Figure 1 shows a prior art hanging basket assembly with a sphagnum moss liner installed;

Figure 2 shows a prior art hanging basket assembly with a plant installed, and in particular illustrates how non-rigid chains collapse into the basket and onto the plant; and

Figure 3 shows a preferred embodiment hanging basket assembly of the present invention with a sphagnum moss liner installed into the basket.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS


Known hanging basket assemblies, an example of which is shown in Figure 1 referred to generally by 11, typically comprise a wire basket 13, hook 19, and non-rigid chains 17 which attach the hook 19 to the basket 13. A sphagnum moss liner 15 is also shown installed within the basket 13.

As mentioned, the lack of rigidity of the chains which attach the hook to the basket present practical problems when utilising such hanging basket assemblies. An example of one of the problems is shown Figure 2, which illustrates a hanging basket assembly of the type shown in Figure 1 with a plant 23 installed. When the hanging basket assembly is stored in a non-hanging position, where it is supported by the base of the basket rather than being hung by the hook, the non-rigid chains 25 and hook (not shown) collapse into the basket and onto the plant 23. This can result in damage to the plant 23.

Figure 3 shows a preferred embodiment hanging basket assembly of the present invention, generally indicated by 30. The hanging basket assembly 30 includes a wire-framed basket 31, although it will be appreciated that other known basket types could be used, such as plastic or cane baskets. The hanging basket assembly 30 includes a hook member 35 to facilitate the hanging of the basket 31. The hook member 35 is attached to the basket by a number of rigid chain members 33. In the preferred embodiment, there are three rigid chain members 33, although it will be appreciated that there may be one or more of these in different configurations. The construction of the rigid chain members 33 ensures that they do not collapse into the basket 31 or onto a plant which it may contain when the hook is not in use.

The hook member 35 includes a hook part 35a to facilitate the hanging of the basket 31 and an attachment part 35b to facilitate the attachment of the rigid chain members 33. It will be appreciated that other hanging mechanisms may be used also.

Each rigid chain member 33 includes a rigid support rod 33a and a chain 33b. One end of each rigid support rod 33a is attached to the attachment part 35b of the hook member 35. The attachment may be by virtue of a spot weld for example, although other attachment means could be used. For example, a loop may be formed at the end of the rigid support rod 33a to facilitate a hooking-type attachment with the attachment part 35b of the hook member 35.



The other end of each rigid support rod 33a is attached to the upper peripheral edge of the basket 31. In the preferred embodiment shown, attachment loops 39 are provided about the upper peripheral edge of the wire frame which forms the basket 31. There is an attachment loop 39 for each rigid chain member 33 and the attachment loops are uniformly spaced about the upper peripheral edge of the basket 31. Attachment of each rigid support rod 33a to each respective attachment loop 39 is achieved by a spot weld, although other attachment means may be used as highlighted above in relation to the attachment of the other end of the rigid support rod 33a to the hook member 35. It will be appreciated that attachment loops 39 are not a necessity, and the end of the rigid support rod 33a may be attached directly to the upper peripheral edge or any other part of the basket 31.

Each chain 33b extends substantially along the entire length of its respective rigid support rod 33a. In the preferred embodiment, one end of each chain 33b is attached by virtue of a spot weld to its respective rigid support rod 33a near the end of the rod which attaches to the hook member 35. The other end of each chain 33b is attached by virtue of a spot weld near the other end of its respective rigid support rod 33a which attaches to the basket 31.

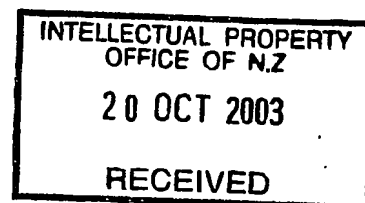
At various positions along the length of each rigid chain member 33, the chain 33b may be spot welded to the rigid support rod 33a. Additionally, or alternatively, the rigid chain member 33 may be configured so that the rigid support rod 33a is woven through a number of the links of the chain 33b.

It will be appreciated that each chain 33b does not necessarily have to be attached to its respective rigid support rod 33a. For example, in an alternative arrangement one end of each chain 33b may be attached directly to the attachment part 35b of the hook member 35, while the other end of each chain 33b may be directly attached to the basket 31. In this alternative embodiment it is preferable that one end of each chain 33b is attached to substantially the same part of the basket 31 as its respective rigid support rod 33a. This ensures that each chain 33b is adjacent to its respective rigid support rod 33a along the entire length of the rigid chain member 33.

The foregoing description of the invention includes preferred forms thereof. Modifications may be made thereto without departing from the scope of the invention.

In an alternative embodiment, the rigid chain members may be formed from chain links which are spot welded together to provide rigidity. In yet another alternative embodiment, each rigid chain member may be formed from a unitary length of wire which has been pre-formed and/or bent to have a chain-like appearance along its length. Additionally, or alternatively, the rigid chain members may be formed from plaiting together more than one wire lengths into a rigid member with a chain like appearance.

The hanging basket assembly of the present invention provides an advantage in that it includes rigid chain members which attach the basket to the hook, as opposed to non-rigid chain members. The rigidity of the chain members means that the hook is held in a preset position so that the process of hanging is easier and hence the use of two hands and/or a hanging device may not be required. Further, the rigid chain members and hook will not collapse into the basket and onto plants when the hook is not being utilised. Moreover, the present invention provides a hanging basket assembly which has the advantages of rigid supports between the hook and basket, while also maintaining the appealing aesthetics of supports with a chain-like appearance.



THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH
COMMUNITY TRUST

By the authorised agents

AJ PARK

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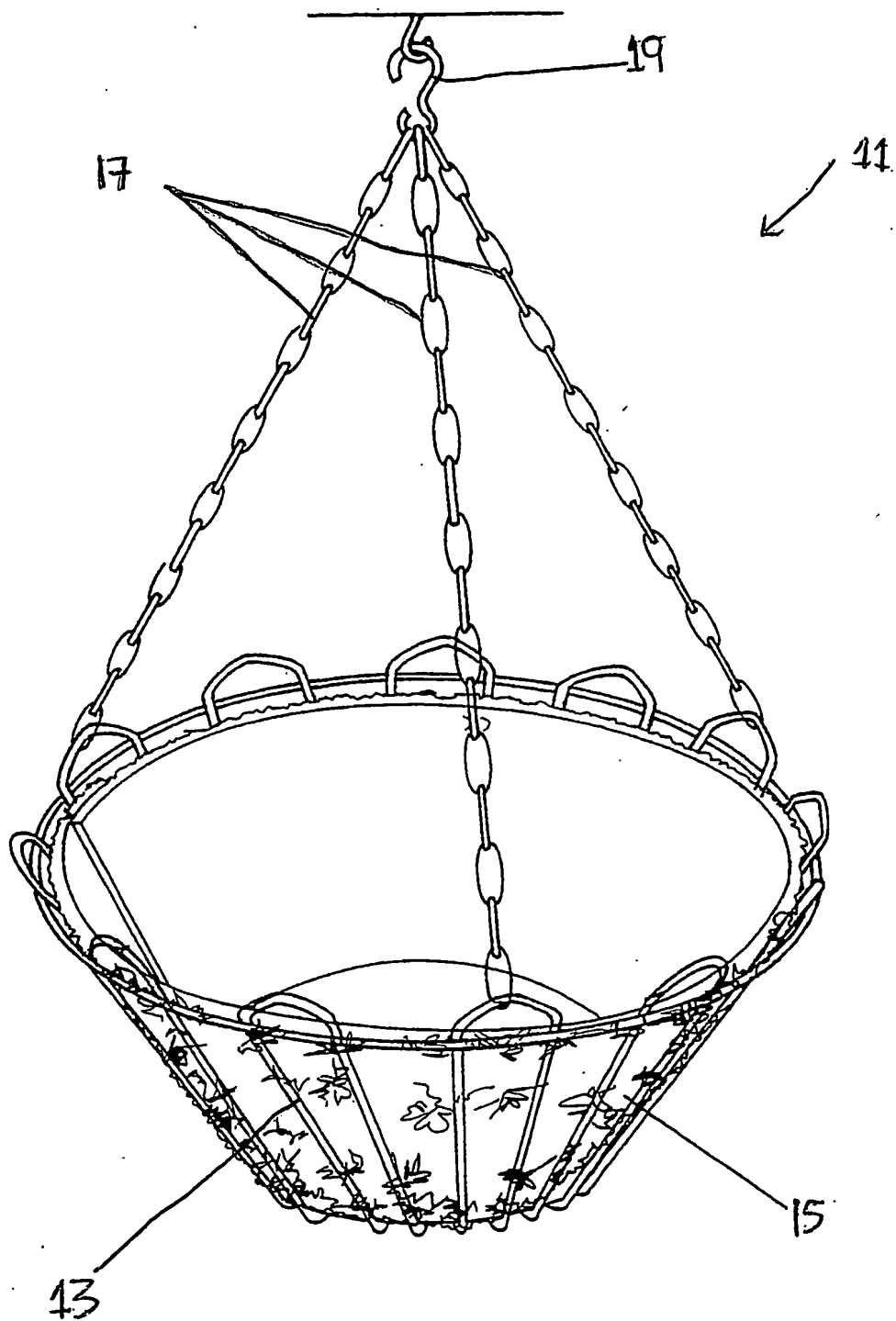


FIGURE 1
(PRIOR ART).



FIGURE 2 (PRIOR ART)

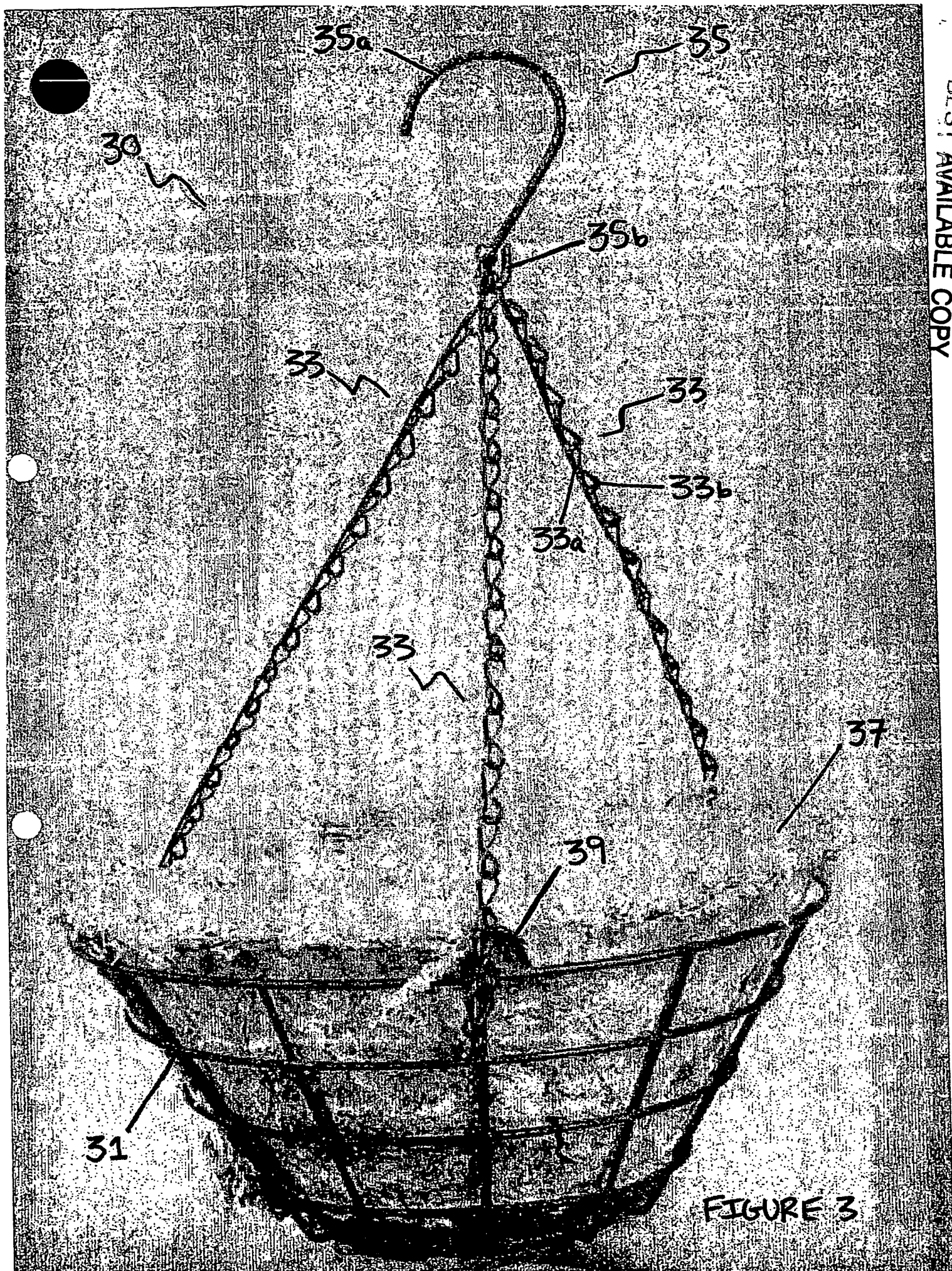


FIGURE 3